

and, after two stubborn battles, agreed upon a fresh division of the world. For eight years, from 315 to 323, this partition lasted, but, as the Emperors again drifted apart, Licinius became more and more anti-Christian. His rivalry with Constantine accounts for the change. Licinius suspected Constantine of intriguing with his Christian subjects just as Constantine regarded the pagan element in his own provinces as the natural focus of disaffection against his rule. Licinius had no definite Christian beliefs; he had been the friend and nominee of Galerius; and, like Galerius, he never got rid of the suspicion that the Christian assemblies were a clanger to the public security. The Christians had aided him against Maximin: he thought they would do the same for Constantine against himself. Eusebius* likens him to a twisted snake, wriggling along and concealing its poisoned fangs, not daring to attack the Church openly for fear of Constantine, but dealing it constant and insidious blows.

The simile was well chosen. Licinius seems to have opened his campaign against the Christians by forbidding the bishops in his provinces to leave their dioceses and take part in their usual synods and councils. They were to remain at home, he said, and mind their own business and not plot treason against their Emperor under the pretext of perfecting the discipline of the Church. Another edict, which came with poor grace from a man whose own excesses were notorious, forbade Christian men and women to meet for common worship in their

* *DC Vita Constant.*, ii., I.